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Request for City Council Committee Action

Date: April 11, 2002

To: Transportation & Public Works Committee

Subject: Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee Resolution

Recommendation

For the City Council and Mayor to pass the following resolution per the February 6, 2002 Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting discussion:

Whereas, The Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee shall recommend to the Mayor, City Council, and Park Board policies and implementation procedures to improve bicycling in the City of Minneapolis for utilitarian and recreational uses; and

Whereas, Every person operating a bicycle in the public street must follow the vehicular rules applicable to other drivers of any other vehicle in the State of Minnesota; and

Whereas, Most demand-actuated traffic signals are not known to be responsive to bicycles; and

Whereas, Most demand-actuated traffic signals are on State and County routes in the City of Minneapolis; and

Let it be resolved, that the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee recommends that the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board working with the State of Minnesota and Hennepin County develop a policy that determines how and when new bicycle loop detection systems can be implemented to respond to bicycles in the same manner as the system responds to other vehicles.

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Approved by: David Sonnenberg, P.E. City Engineer, Director of Public Works
Greg Finstad, P.E. Director, Transportation and Parking Services

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Presenters in Committee: Donald Pflaum, Minneapolis Public Works

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

___ No financial impact (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)

___ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget
___ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget
___ Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase
___ Action requires use of contingency or reserves
_X_ Other financial impact (Explain): A new policy could result in an increase in the operating budget.

___Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Background/Supporting Information:

There are generally two types of traffic signals within the City of Minneapolis, pre-timed signals and actuated signals. Pre-timed signals work through the signal phases on regularly timed intervals. Pre-timed signals are typically found at the intersections of two busy roadways or along a major corridor. Actuated signals use loop detectors or other detection devises to recognize the presence of a motor vehicle. Actuated signals are useful in many locations to keep traffic moving based on directional demand.

On-street bicyclists are often frustrated with actuated, or demand-based signals because the loop detectors that detect motor vehicles are not sensitive enough to detect the metal in bicycles. Therefore bicyclists wanting to cross an intersection will often have to sit and wait at the intersection. On-street bicyclists must either wait for a motor vehicle or utilize the pedestrian push buttons at the nearest crosswalk to be recognized by the signal. Inconveniences such as this discourage bicycle use.

In the process of developing a policy with respect to this issue, new and existing detection technology will be explored. Most importantly this policy must address the financial impact of such technology. If the technology is feasible, a system-wide implementation plan will accompany the recommended policy. It is recommended that Public Works and Park Board staff be given one year to explore this issue and report back to the City Council and Park Board in March 2003 with a recommended policy and implementation plan.